



# | University of New Haven

Testimony to the Planning & Development Committee Regarding:

**H.B. 6804: AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE ASSESSMENT OF FIRE DISTRICT USER FEES ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES and H.B. 5868: AN ACT AUTHORIZING MUNICIPALITIES TO IMPOSE A TAX ON THE ENDOWMENT FUNDS OF PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

March 3, 2023

This testimony is provided on behalf of the University of New Haven, a not-for-profit, tax-exempt educational institution (consistent with tax-exempt non-profit colleges and universities throughout the country).

The University of New Haven is arguably the primary economic engine in West Haven. The University's growth has served to support a number of private taxable development projects in West Haven, which simply would not have occurred without the university. In lieu of constructing university tax-exempt university owned residence halls, the University has instead chosen to enter into long-term leases with private developers. Private student housing developments provide direct taxable revenue to the City of West Haven. These include, but are not limited to: the Forest Hills apartments (23 Simon Place assessment of \$4.5 million); the Savin Court apartments (783 Savin Avenue assessment of \$1.6 million); the Main Street townhouse (491 Main Street combined assessment of \$1.6 million); Forest Manor apartments (1 Atwood Place assessment of \$7.1 million), and the Park Commons apartments (1 Cellini Place assessment of \$5.5 million). This represents **over \$20 million of taxable property** for student housing within the City of West Haven that is the **direct result of the University electing to develop taxable student housing in order to financially benefit the City of West Haven.**

In addition to the taxable revenues that the City of West Haven derives from these taxable developments, the neighborhoods surrounding the University have been improved through enhanced security provided by the fully licensed University police force. University of New Haven officers are sworn officers through the City of West Haven and our officers serve a critical role throughout West Haven in assisting the City of West Haven police.

The University of New Haven provides a significant economic impact, security impact, and clean neighborhood impact to many areas of West Haven. The recent move of the Hartford Healthcare Corporation to leased (taxable) space at the Park Commons development in the Allingtown section of West Haven is the direct result of the University. As such, the City of West Haven derives a significant financial benefit from the University of New Haven. Additionally, the University annually makes a voluntary direct contribution of \$100,000 as well as numerous smaller donations to organizations affiliated with the City of West Haven. And finally, the University provides guaranteed scholarships to West Haven students.

Assessing any user fees to the University will have an adverse impact on our students at a time when families are already struggling to support the cost of higher education. As such, the University believes that H.B. 6804 and H.B. 5868 are not in the best interests of the City of West Haven, not in the best interests of the State of Connecticut, and not in the best interest of students and their parents.

*George S. Synodi*

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